

John, May 16 @ 9:30 AM

JON R. FRIEDMAN

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4/29/02

Dr. Harold Varmus
1 Gracie Sq.
East End Avenue & 84th St.
New York, NY 10028
212 744-1155

Save for
mky

Dear Harold,

I made the trip down to NIH last week to look at your former office and at the previously commissioned portraits. Save for a suggestion of background color, I doubt that we will end up using much in the way of detail from that office.

I took snapshots of the other portraits and I've enclosed reproductions. As I go about shaping the composition of your portrait it would be useful for me to know if there are attributes among them that appeal to you, or, on the contrary, aspects that you particularly dislike.

While I was at the NIH campus, at least three different people – one of the secretaries, a doctor and one of the security guards – upon finding out that I was going to be painting your portrait each inquired if I was planning to include your bicycle. I think your associates would be disappointed if we banished it altogether. In my mind's eye there is something puckishly appealing about the juxtaposition of Lavoisier and your bike. (Judging from the shapeliness of Lavoisier's calf, I've no doubt that he would have taken to the bicycle had he had the opportunity.) Anyway, give it some thought. There ought to be a way of incorporating the bike into the painting without being hokey about it.

Your secretary Connie gave me a copy of the publicity photo that Sloan Kettering has been sending out. If you're amenable, I hope that we can dispense with the tie altogether and go with a striped shirt as opposed to a solid color. Our photo shoot is scheduled for 9am on May 16th. If you have any ideas that you would like to pass on to me prior to the shoot, I will be back in the city on the 11th. Otherwise, we'll just wing it that morning, and I'm sure it will work out fine.

JV

Best regards,

